

Recognition of English and German Borrowings in the Russian Language (Based on Lexical Borrowings in the Field of Economics)

Alsu Ashrapova¹ & Svetlana Alendeeva¹

¹ Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia

Correspondence: Alsu Ashrapova, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, Kazan Federal University, 2 Tatarstan, 420021, Kazan, Russia. Tel: 7-917-224-06-61. E-mail: tatarandlanguages@gmail.com

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Abstract

This article is the result of a study of the influence of English and German on the Russian language during the English learning based on lexical borrowings in the field of economics. This paper discusses the use and recognition of borrowings from the English and German languages by Russian native speakers. The use of lexical borrowings from English and German by Russian people is examined across age groups, occupations and knowledge of foreign languages. The main goal of this study is to demonstrate that use and recognition of lexical borrowings vary between age groups, occupation and knowledge of foreign languages. Analyzing the results we found out that the age of an individual influences the degree of recognition of borrowings; people connected with the field of economics by their occupation performed more recognized borrowings; the occupation of the participants had more effect than knowledge of foreign languages. Fully assimilated words were difficult to identify. The results may benefit English teachers in terms of emphasizing the signs of distinguishing borrowings to English learners, and contributing to using native words.

Keywords: assimilation of borrowings, borrowings, influence of English, influence of German, language contact, the Russian language, recognition of borrowings

1. Introduction

It is highly important and prestigious to speak one or several foreign languages. Using foreign words an individual is appreciated higher socially. "We are now engaged in multiple-vector communicational war in which language status is not an idle question but a question of vitality of a certain lingual culture" (Karabulatova & Polivara, 2013, p. 832). It gives an opportunity to show one's cultural or social authority. There are a lot of methods of accelerated foreign language learning. Sometimes they turn to be not so efficient. That is why we think it is necessary to improve the level of teaching foreign languages and to search for new techniques of teaching.

"Globalization, as a whole-planetary phenomenon, covering all spheres of existence, actualized the problem of global education in multicultural educational space; its leading mechanism of functioning is the pedagogical communication" (Auhadeeva, 2014, p. 583).

The questions of the language purity are of great importance here. How much foreign vocabulary do we need? Can the process of borrowing be regulated? Do foreign words "litter" the recipient language? Can people use native words in their speech instead of foreign ones? All these questions are discussed everywhere. The point is more and more often people don't even know that they use borrowings. They don't know how to distinguish between them.

Frank E. Daulton cites "Lexical borrowing typically is the adoption of individual words or even large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect. It can also include roots and affixes, sounds, collocations, and grammatical processes. It has profound implications for various aspects of applied linguistics, including sociolinguistics and foreign-language learning" (Daulton, 2012).

Being well studied, the problem of borrowings can still find reflections in researchers in the field of a second language acquisition, as well as in studying the influence of the age on the acquisition of a foreign language (Chen, 2014). Different educational levels and occupation are also of great importance for our future work basing on the conducted study.

We have chosen the field of economics for our survey as a lot of people nowadays take courses in Business English due to the demand of the developing world. We should not forget that we learn foreign languages to use them not only at English lessons, but outside too. We hope that our article can contribute to the studying of the problem of Business English Teaching as well as there are a lot of differences between General English Teaching and Business English Teaching (Zhu, 2008; Zhu, Deng, & Li, 2014).

2. Theoretical Overview

The problem of borrowings has always been one of the most controversial in lexicology.

Martin Haspelmath (Haspelmath, 2009, p. 36) says, “the term borrowing has been used in two different senses: (i) As a general term for all kinds of transfer or copying processes, whether they are due to native speakers adopting elements from other languages into the recipient language, or whether they result from non-native speakers imposing properties of their native language onto a recipient language. This general sense seems to be by far the most prevalent use of the term borrowing. But borrowing has also been used in a more restricted sense, (ii) “to refer to the incorporation of foreign elements into the speakers’ native language” (Thomason & Kaufman, 1988, p. 21), i.e. as a synonym of adoption (Thomason and Kaufman use the term substratum interference for ‘imposition’, and interference as a cover term for ‘borrowing/adoption’ and ‘substratum interference/imposition’”).

There are different classifications of borrowings.

According to Einar Haugen (Haugen, 1950, pp. 210-231) there are three groups of borrowings: “1) Loanwords show morphemic importation without substitution. [...]. 2) Loanblends show morphemic substitution as well as importation. [...]. 3) Loanshifts show morphemic substitution without importation”. This classification is a point of interest for us as it is connected not only with the process of penetration of borrowed words into the recipient language but also with their assimilation in a language.

The German scientist Thomas Shippan (Shippan, 1984, p. 307) [30] distinguishes between:

1) Lehnwörter—loan words.

These loans were completely conformed to the language system of the receptor language, they aren't perceived as foreign.

2) Fremdwörter—foreign words.

Krysin L.P., considering units of various levels of language system as elements of foreign language—phonetics, morphology, semantics, lexicon, syntax, suggests to distinguish phonetic, semantic, lexical, morphological and syntactic borrowings (Krysin, 1996, p. 34).

Bloomfield (1933, pp. 444-461) gives classifications according to the kind of relationship between the affected languages: “cultural borrowing” versus “intimate borrowing”; and classifications according to the kind of hierarchy between the varieties of speech affected: borrowing between national languages versus “dialect borrowing”.

Lionel Meney points out that a classification of borrowing should take into account sociolinguistic factors such as sex, social status, communicative situation, and register (Meney, 1994, pp. 930-943).

Discussing a valid general classification of linguistic borrowing or interference, Juan Gómez Capuz (1997, pp. 81-94) writes about “global objections to the validity of a classification of linguistic borrowing that are taken by Els Oksaar: on one side, we cannot devise a general typology of borrowing on the basis of a few Western languages; on the other, successive attempts to classify borrowing are felt to be partial and imperfect, simply “because of the insufficiency of the present systems to cover most of the possibilities of the process and of the results of linguistic integration” (Oksaar, 1972, pp. 475-511).

We use the term “borrowing” in a more common sense in this article. “Borrowing” has been traditionally identified with “lexical borrowing” as we can see in the classic work of Deroy (1956, pp. 18-21).

Lexical borrowing is the most common type of languages interference.

All borrowings are the result of the language contact. Here is a definition for language contact given by Thomason “... the use of more than one language in the same place at the same time” (Thomason, 2001, p. 1).

3. Influence of English and German on Economic Terms of the Russian Language

According to Wikipedia the Russian language “is the most geographically widespread language of Eurasia and the most widely spoken of the Slavic languages. It is also the largest native language in Europe, with 144 million

native speakers in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Russian is the 8th most spoken language in the world by number of native speakers and the 7th by total number of speakers. The language is one of the six official languages of the United Nations” (Wikipedia). The Russian language belongs to the Indo-European language family. It enters the Slavic group of languages.

No language stays without borrowings in a modern world though. Lexical borrowings by one language from another are a regular consequence of language contacts that take place in a history of development and existence of any language. Contacts between nations inevitably lead to interaction between their languages. These contacts grow wider and more intensive nowadays.

English is one of the most spoken languages nowadays. It is not a pure language though. It has borrowed thousands of words from other languages. English becomes a language of business communication worldwide, it penetrates into various fields being an international language. A huge portion of Russian vocabulary has been taken from English.

The history of Russia and Germany is closely connected throughout many centuries. In the IX century Kievan Rus’ did trade with the German feudal lords. Russia does trade with a lot of countries. German is with no doubt one of them. Thus a lot of economic terms in Russian have been taken from German.

The Russian language was always open for lexicon replenishment from foreign languages. Foreign terms dominate in financial and commercial activities. There are some cases that foreign words are borrowed if there are no equivalents in the native language. Still we believe prestige is more and more often a reason of borrowings promotion.

We can find a lot of English borrowings in the field of economics in Russian language: “холдинг”, “сканировать”, “патент”, “экспорт”, “импорт”, “дилер”, “менеджмент” etc. There are a lot of borrowings from German too: “агент”, “вексель”, “контора”, “процент”, “бухгалтер”, “штраф”, “ярмарка” etc. The economics changes a lot and many English and German words become necessary. Sometimes we can only guess or look up in etymological dictionaries to find out that these words were borrowed.

Terms of a foreign origin in the majority have no Russian synonyms (“бухгалтер” from German). It makes them irreplaceable in a scientific style. There are still a lot of foreign terms borrowed from English that have Russian synonyms (“импорт” instead of “воз”). The Russian language seems to be overloaded by borrowings from English. We can’t but admit that Russian equivalents are more informal than official. It is popular to use English words instead of Russian (“прайс” instead of “цена”).

We decided to conduct a survey to find out if people can distinguish borrowings between the words of their native language.

4. Survey/Method

The research is based on economic terminology of English, German and Russian. It is devoted to the field of lexicology and observes the process of borrowings as one of the main sources of the lexicon renewal.

We conducted a survey within a group of 20 Russian native speakers. The result of our work was to identify the degree of recognition of borrowings. We were interested if participants could distinguish between borrowings and native words and what factors influenced on the process of recognition of borrowings.

We performed 40 words for the group: 20 words from the native language and 20 words borrowed from English and German. We should point out that English is of great influence on German too, and there are a lot of words that seem to be English though being of German origin.

Mainly we used an informant approach in our study. With the help of native speakers we searched out a percent of recognition of economic terms. We chose people of different age and occupation. We intentionally chose people working in the sphere of economics (a credit manager, a store manager), teachers of foreign languages and students of linguistic universities (a teacher of English, a student of English department, a student of German department) that speak at least two goal languages; and people whose occupations were connected neither with economics, nor with foreign languages learning (a student of Chemistry department, a zootechnician).

Special attention was paid to the category of participants that would perform the best result. Their age at the time of the experiment varied from 20 to 51 years old.

Thus we distinguish several factors that influence on the degree of recognition of borrowings:

1) Age;

- 2) Occupation;
- 3) Knowledge of foreign languages;
- 4) The degree of assimilation of borrowings.

Most linguists suggest distinguishing 3 main stages of evolution of borrowings in a language or 3 main types of borrowings corresponding to these 3 stages (Aristova, 1978, p. 159; Krysin, 1996, p. 34; Richter, 1919).

1st stage—penetration into the speech (non-assimilated foreign words-barbarisms);

2nd stage—partial adoption (partially assimilated borrowings):

- a) Borrowings, non-assimilated on a semantic level;
- b) Borrowings, non-assimilated on a grammar level;
- c) Borrowings, not fully assimilated on a phonetic level;
- d) Borrowings, not fully assimilated on a graphical level;

3^d stage—rooting (fully assimilated borrowings).

Fully assimilated words correspond to all morphological, phonetic and orthographic standards of the recipient language and are perceived by a speaker as native ones.

The first step of the research was to find borrowed economic terms and to make a questionnaire.

The range of terms used in the experiment is taken from different sources, but first of all from dictionaries of foreign words, dictionaries of economic terms and Etymology dictionaries (Wirtschaftslexikon; Mein-wirtschaftslexikon.de.; Wiktionary; Vasmer, 1986; Duden. Herkunftswörterbuch; MyEtymology.com-A universal etymologydictionary; Deutsch-Englisch-Wörterbuch).

The next step was a questionnaire survey. Native speakers were to identify 20 borrowed word and word expressions, and to show criteria of the borrowings.

We thought it was appropriate to limit the time of the task performance up to 10 minutes. Using reference materials was forbidden.

We used a statistical approach while summing up the results.

5. Results/Analysis

Basing on the statistical approach we made summary figure and tables (Figure 1, Table 1 and 2).

Analyzing the materials we can draw several conclusions from this study:

- people at the age of 30-45 had better results rather than 21-30 and after 45;
- people working in the field of economics performed more recognized borrowings;
- knowledge of goal languages had an influence on the results of the experiment, this factor is of less importance compared to the occupation of participants;
- a large number of participants (19 out of 20) recognized non-assimilated and partially assimilated words.

For instance, it was easy (18 recognitions out of 20) to recognize exotisms (“доллар”, “пфенниг”). It shows that such words have something not Russian in their meaning. They have a local color.

There was no difficulty in recognizing such words as “менеджер”, “партнер”, “гастарбайтер”. Nevertheless only participants speaking foreign languages could point out certain marks of the borrowings (-er, -or).

Only 10 participants out of 20 could recognize the words “контролер” and “штраф”. Only 4 people recognized the word “ярмарка”. That means that these words were fully assimilated in the Russian language.

Almost all borrowings were believed to be taken from English, what confirms the great influence of this language on Russian and German nowadays.

Correct recognition

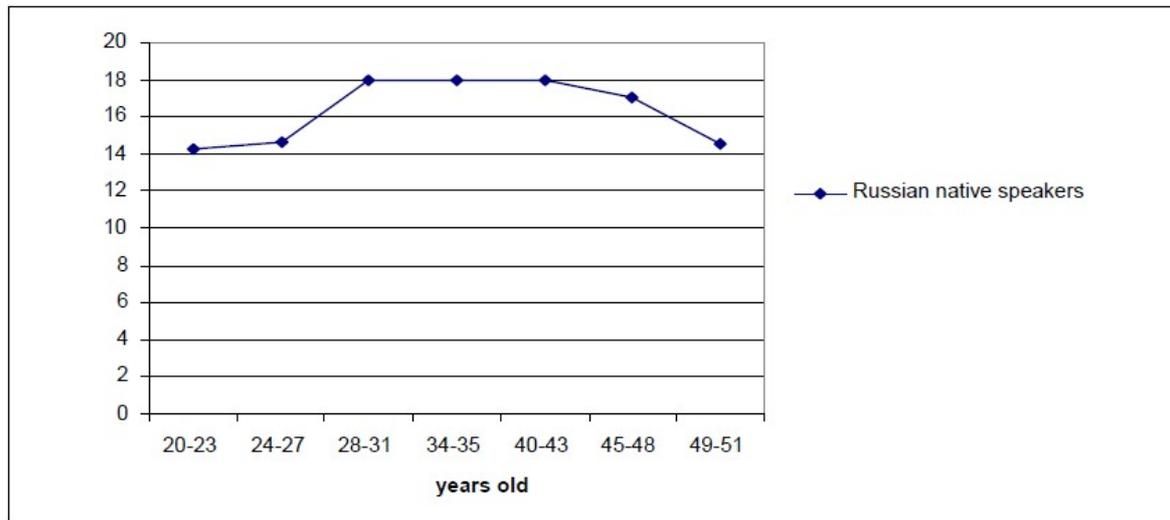


Figure 1. Dependence of the number of recognitions on the age

Table 1. Dependence of the number of recognitions on occupation and knowledge of foreign languages

	Participants, working in the field of economics	Participants, speaking goal languages	Participants connected neither with economics, nor with learning foreign languages
	Percentage ratio of correct recognitions		
Russian native speakers	83%	81%	63%

Table 2. The number of recognized borrowings

Borrowings	Number of recognitions
Менеджер (from English: manager)	19
Партнер (from English: partner)	19
Гастарбайтер (from German: Gastarbeiter)	19
Спонсор (from English: sponsor)	18
Дилер (from English: dealer)	18
Гешефт (from German: Geschäft)	18
Пфенниг (from German: Pfennig)	18
Патент (from English: patent)	18
Бартер (from English: barter)	18
Доллар (from English: dollar)	18
Штемпель (from German: Stempel)	17
Вексель (from German: Wechsel)	17
Маклер (from German: Makler)	16
Импорт (from English: import)	16
Фритредерство (from English: free-trade)	16
Бухгалтер (from German: Buchhalter)	13
Марка (from German: Marke)	13
Штраф (from German: Strafe)	10
Контролер (from English: controller)	10
Ярмарка (from German: Jahrmakkt)	4

6. Conclusion

The number of recognitions of borrowings among learning English and German languages isn't accidentally higher, than among people working as, for example, a zootechnician and a psychologist. There is quite a reasonable explanation for this. People didn't "see" characteristic signs of English and German, as they simply didn't know about them; but they see that these words are widely used, submit to the rules of grammar of the native language: words are being changed according to cases etc.

We were determined to find out what factors the fact of recognition of economic terms of the borrowed origin in the Russian language depends on.

Our experiment shows that part of borrowings are so assimilated that they remain unrecognizable and nothing gives them out. It means that they became a part of our lexicon, they are clear to us, they don't cause any difficulties in a pronunciation, they are used in various styles and don't complicate communication.

However there are also borrowed words which hadn't get accustomed in the recipient language as many words were unfamiliar for examinees.

Lexical borrowings are one of the sources of formation of new words. Their studying allows tracking complexity of language processes, an entwinement of the internal and external phenomena in language, impact of the last on various links of a language structure.

The results of our small survey can serve as a material for future development. We hope this study can contribute to better understanding of difficulties found by people when dealing with recognition of borrowed vocabulary in the receptor language. It can also serve a material for studying the difference in adoption and use of English and German by people of different age groups. Nowadays English is considered to be an international language. Learning English may become more effective through a consideration of differences between languages and it is an opportunity to prevent probable errors due to negative transfer. The examples of borrowings in our research were taken from the field of economics. Zamaletdinov R. R. and Zamaletdinova G. F. say that quite seriously extended economic, cultural and scientific contacts of different countries and their people nowadays put forward the subject of "language and culture" as one of the most important sociolinguistic and general linguistic problems (Zamaletdinov & Zamaletdinova, 2012, p. 142). That is why the field of economics can be interesting regarding the contribution of our small research to the teaching of the English language as in the conditions of cross-cultural communication development of criteria of selection of the text material displaying realities of the culture and household of the native speakers of the learned language is important (Zamaletdinov, 2012, p. 122).

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